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The New Misinformation

THE EXTENT to which the country is being currently misinformed about vital matters, is splendidly illustrated by the fashionable handling of the most recent installment of the Anderson papers. Jack Anderson himself, who ably secured these secret documents, presented his original excerpts for what they were worth, so to say.

The same cannot be said for the sequels by others. To begin with, the new documents offer the clearest proof the U.S. government had (or believed it had) conclusive proof of the Indian government's desire to destroy West Pakistan.

Here, in fact, is CIA Director Richard Helms, speaking on December 8, 1971, on this crucial point of Indira Gandhi's intentions. "Before heeding a U.N. call for a ceasefire, she intends to straighten out the southern border of Azad Kashmir. It is (further) reported that prior to terminating present hostilities, Mrs. Gandhi intends to eliminate Pakistan's armor and air force capabilities."

Eliminating Pakistan's armor and air force capabilities would have amounted, of course, to smashing all the remaining armed forces in West Pakistan. With the armed forces smashed, in turn, West Pakistan would unquestionably disintegrated, as Dr. Henry A. Kissinger rightly pointed out at the same meeting of the Washington special action group. Dismembering West Pakistan was in truth Mrs. Gandhi's real aim—until her Soviet protectors told her she must stop on December 12, 1971, four days after the date of the new Anderson document.

With the state department's incorrigible fondness for looking on the good side, Assistant Secretary Joseph Sisco plaintively replied to Helms that the Indian foreign minister had denied any ambition for "West Pakistan's territory." Yet he did not dispute Helms' assess-

ment of the Indian intention to smash the Pakistani armed forces, for good and all.

THE TRUTH is, Sisco could not dispute the Helms assessment, for he was well aware of the "conclusive proof" in the U.S. government's hands. Furthermore, Sisco freely admitted the correctness of Dr. Kissinger's assessment of the results, assuming the Pakistani armed forces were going to be smashed.

No one else at the meeting cast any other real doubt on the Helms report and the Kissinger assessment. In the circumstances, it is therefore a mite odd that the great newspaper publishing the new Anderson document went out of its way to pooh-pooh the whole idea of any such "conclusive proof," as first revealed by this reporter.

The New York Times front page headline on the new document further announced that "Packard opposed Kissinger on India." In reality, Under Secretary of Defense David Packard broadly and rather strongly supported the policy of the President—which Dr. Kissinger was merely expounding.

What Packard "opposed" (as inquiry would have revealed) was, instead, the State Department policy on a specific point. This was attempting to channel new arms for Pakistan through Jordan and other Islamic states. The under secretary of defense sensibly thought it was more wise to "tell the truth and shame the devil," by giving the new arms directly to West Pakistan if the need arose—although it does not appear clearly in the present document.

HERE, THEN, was a perfectly genuine documentary fragment of the record, which led to the grossest possible misrepresentation of the true record. In passing the fragments

ter of the document needs emphasis. The special action group, from which the Anderson documents originated, was solely concerned with day-to-day implementation of policy.

The policy itself had been pre-decided and subsequently reexamined under the President's leadership, at several meetings of the National Security Council. In addition, lesser reexaminations were made by another body, the special Review Group. Thus there was no reason even to discuss "the conclusive proof" at meetings of the special action group.

It can be argued that President Nixon was right

or wrong in wishing to prevent West Pakistan's dismemberment by India, under the aegis of the Soviet Union. The fact remains that this was what President Nixon did prevent. Furthermore, he prevented it by sheer, cold courage.

He had to warn the Soviet leaders of the worst possible kind of Soviet-American showdown, short of actual war, to get the Kremlin to order Mrs. Gandhi to agree to a cease fire without delay. It took Mrs. Gandhi four days to yield, too, for she only gave to Soviet pressure on December 16, 1971. Surely these facts are a bit more interesting than the current deluge of misinformation.

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